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## **Team London Bridge response to the Central London Bus Review**

1. Team London Bridge (TLB) is the Business Improvement District (BID) representing approximately 400 businesses in the area between London Bridge to the west, Tower Bridge to the east, and south towards Bermondsey. TLB has a strong remit from businesses since 2015 to deliver the [London Bridge Plan](#). Our mission is to ensure London Bridge excels as a leading place for global commerce and continues to develop as a pioneering local centre for enterprise, culture and entertainment. The Plan supports our role as an important and growing transport interchange, with a focus on: public transport, walking and cycling; reducing the impact of private vehicles, servicing and deliveries; and supporting initiatives that improve the quality of the air.
2. Proposed changes directly relevant to London Bridge include:
  - 48 and RV1 to be withdrawn (with alternative routes proposed)
  - 343 and 40 to have a 'route restructure'
  - 149 to have reductions and increases
3. TLB led a grouping of 17 Central London BIDs in 2017 to respond collectively to the Mayor's Transport Strategy. The result of the joint response was to seek areas of common ground to support the Mayor in making important decisions in relation to Central London as a thriving city for business. Some key points in the response that relate to this Bus Review are:
  - We support the Mayor's focus on reducing road danger, improving air quality and increasing active travel. We agree that the future of central London must involve a steady reduction in the use of private cars (however fuelled or autonomous), and therefore that walking, cycling and public transport use must continue to increase.
  - We are especially concerned about the urgent need for action on air quality, road safety and congestion in central London. We strongly support the aim of reducing traffic volumes London-wide by about 6m vehicle km per day by 2041, but would again like to see steps towards this target for central/inner/outer London.
  - We call on the Mayor to set far more challenging targets for zero emission buses, building on existing proposals for Low Emissions Bus Zones
  - We urge the Mayor to play a leading role in enabling resolution of any differences between boroughs affecting the implementation of key proposals in central London.

- Specifically, we consider that there is a need for a more comprehensive review of central London’s bus, taxi, traffic, and cycle networks than has so far been undertaken in connection with Oxford Street and other workstreams.
  - We welcome the Hopper fare introduced in 2016 such that people will be able to make unlimited bus or tram transfers within the hour.
4. London Bridge is a major bus interchange with 20 bus routes that enter the area and between 4.3 to 6.3m bus boardings per year. TLB worked with TfL to produce a London Bridge Outcome Plan document in 2017 which summarises the local bus service as follows:



- Major bus hub with many services
- Key movement role
- Low bus speeds & congestion delays reduce service JTR
- Diversions impacting service attractiveness & revenue
- Aspiration to reinstate services

5. One of the priority outcomes (no. 6) of this report is:

- Reinstatement of full bus services along Tooley St with priority measures where appropriate
- Take opportunities to support Bus Priority Corridors



6. It is unclear from the Bus Review if the objective is to reduce services to meet the decreasing demand for bus services in Central London (12% in Southwark since 2014), or if TfL aim to provide a better service to increase future demand – in line with the MTS ambition. TLB supports the reduction in buses where they contribute to an unreliable service by reducing bus-on-bus congestion (which is very apparent in some locations in the area).
7. TLB requests greater clarity over where savings made will be redirected. We strongly suggest that this should go towards supporting bus prioritisation schemes to enable a better service or measures to improve ‘healthy streets’ indicators. An example of such a scheme would be to find a more practical solution to the hostile vehicle mitigation barriers on London Bridge which have effectively removed bus lanes (and squeezed space for cycling), and we are currently working with TfL to improve bus priority along Tooley Street alongside measures to improve walking and cycling.
8. It is also unclear if the aim of the Bus Review is to improve air quality. This is a priority in this area as we are currently one of the Mayor’s Low Emission Neighbourhoods. We are certainly disappointed that a clean hydrogen powered service is being removed (RV1), and we can only support this measure if the

restructured 343 route also uses low emission vehicles. It is essential that London moves to a clean fleet of buses at a quicker timetable than set out in the MTS, and again, service savings should be invested in this. We would also like to know if the proposed measures are expected to make any improvements to air quality through reduced congestion.

9. We can say little about the individual journeys of those using buses to and from London Bridge, but have promoted the Review so that businesses and individuals can respond directly where they have more knowledge.

We are aware of much vocal local support to keep the RV1 bus. Given the details available to us we are unsure of the benefits to our business members of the bus. While we recognise that this is a bus that links tourist destinations, it is unclear if the bus is providing an effective tourist service and experience (and a new private sightseeing bus will soon be returning to this area, though this does little to connect us to the South Bank). This bus has clearly suffered from ongoing works and we would be keen to know if decisions are based on the most accurate data. We suggest a delay to gather more evidence now that roads have re-opened around London Bridge and bus patronage can be judged more accurately. We do however welcome improved connectivity on a high frequency double decker 343 bus.

10. One of the key impacts of this measure will be that people will need to interchange more. While we welcome potentially transformative technology including the hopper fare and applications like City Mapper, little information is provided about how this has impacted on experience of bus users. It is therefore unclear if these benefits outweigh the disbenefits of increased changes. Certainly there will be an impact on more vulnerable groups, which is a concern, particularly next to hospitals in London Bridge, and we hope that additional support can be provided to those that will be hit. We would seek assurance that savings made from the proposals go towards improving comfort, safety and convenience between interchanges.

11. In summary, we can only support the Review if the proposed changes can help us meet some of the key objectives set out in the London Bridge Plan, the TfL London Bridge Outcome Plan and our response to the MTS, though it is often unclear if this is achieved:

- Improved air quality
- Improved reliability
- Reduced congestion
- Funding re-allocated to support Healthy Streets objectives

We look forward to ongoing discussion with TfL to address these points.

Yours faithfully



Nadia Broccardo  
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Team London Bridge